**Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions (KSDs) – Building Relational Trust**

This title is taken directly from the Leadership BES wording. Can those at all levels of school leadership use relational trust as an effective part of leading achievement initiatives?

Building suggests you can get to a point where trusting relationships have been achieved and all is well. Senior and middle leaders and principals must maintain and enhance relational trust as well.

The reality for leaders is that working relationships in school communities are forever moving and changing so building, maintaining and enhancing trust are all action sets within a leader’s disposition.

The three exploratory steps below use the structure provided by the KSDs to find out more about the knowledge, skills and dispositions that underpin Building Relational Trust.

There are many other resources and ways to explore this topic. These steps make use of the leadership collections in [www.educationalleaders.govt.nz](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz)

1. **Knowledge of and about Relational Trust – finding, analysing, storing and retrieving**

Grow your knowledge about relational trust in schools. The Educational Leaders website – [www.educationalleaders.govt.nz](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz) opens the door to a range of useful sources.

Store, add to and retrieve as needed your knowledge pack on relational trust – e.g. KSDtrust as a tag in Delicious will access the resources named in this section.

Digging into the meaning of relational trust and its implications for leaders

* [Building Trusting Relationships for School Improvement](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Culture/Leading-staff/Building-Trusting-Relationships-for-School-Improvement-Implications-for-Principals-and-Teachers) by Cori Brewster and Jennifer Railsback Brewster, C. & Railsback, J. (2003). *Building trusting relationships for school improvement: Implications for principals and teachers*. Oregon, USA: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

This publication provides an easy to follow analysis of the issues and how to understand the relationship things leaders need to be actively working on.

Explore your school relationship culture.

* [What is our school culture like? A Checklist for Analysing School Culture](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Culture/Understanding-school-cultures/What-is-our-School-Culture-Like-A-Checklist-for-Analysing-a-School-s-Culture) Section 4 in this long checklist provides several useful lists that school leaders can use to open up understanding of staff culture and consequently the working relationships. Note there are sections for students, BOT and community.

Relationships are embedded in school people contexts.

* [Overcoming the Obstacles to Leadership](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept07/vol65/num01/Overcoming-the-Obstacles-to-Leadership.aspx) Johnson,S.M., & Donaldson, M. L. 2008. “Overcoming the Obstacles to Leadership”. in Educational Leadership, volume 65, Summer, pp 8 – 13 Explore leadership contexts
* Explore the relational trust summaries provided in [School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why (BES)](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/2515/60169/60170) pp 182-189 and pp 236-241. Use them to put into your school context ideas about relational trust.

1. **Skills Leaders use to Build, Maintain and Enhance Relational Trust**

Leaders actions that build trust occur across all of the diverse personal interactions they have in the course of their daily work. Keep in mind that many interactions between teachers are in small time capsules – frequently they are fewer than 30 seconds in length and frequently leaders will have a series of these interactions at times when teachers are not engaged with students such as at mid-morning breaks. Developing the skills to build trust as a result of these series of short communications is a demanding challenge.

Building relational trust can be viewed like establishing strong credit balances with others so when risks need to be taken or change initiated as a leader you are trusted to do the right thing.

Leadership involves skill tests related to the positive and if you like nice aspects of growing together but includes skills being applied to working through difficult issues with teachers so trust is enhanced in the long term.

The examples below explore some aspects of developing skills strongly related to building, maintaining and enhancing trusting relationships in school.

* [Building Trust in schools through open to learning conversations](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Leadership-development/First-time-principals-modules/Module-3) provides a detailed analysis of how to build trust through application of a range of communication skills. It is ideal for individuals to use and follow in a self-paced learning fashion. Professor Viviane Robinson uses a set of slides as she talks us through the process.
* [A Better than Normal Learning Journey](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Leading-change/Educational-leadership-in-action/Better-than-normal-learning-journey) – Shona Oliver, Palmerston North Central Normal School. Shona describes the path taken as a new leader in building trust and shared achievement goals. How many groups of skills has she used?
* [Changing Practice through Shared Leadership](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Leading-change/Educational-leadership-in-action/Changing-practice) – Peter Witana, Kawakawa Primary School. What range of relationship skills has Peter used and in turn developed in others?

These next two sources are of general interest and are not from [www.educationalleaders.govt.nz](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz)

* [10 Crucial and Surprising Steps to Build Trust in a Relationship](http://ezinearticles.com/?10-Crucial-and-Surprising-Steps-to-Build-Trust-in-a-Relationship&id=2136) - This short paper provides useful suggestions and descriptions of what actions encourage the development of relational trust.
* [Steven Barkleys Blog](http://blogs.plsweb.com/2008/12/relational-trust.html) provides further simple description of how to make relational trust grow and work.

1. **A Leadership Disposition that builds, maintains and enhances relational trust**

**Confirming Dispositions that are Built on Relational Trust**

Our New Zealand school systems operate in human contexts that reflect the nature and expectations of Kiwi life and culture. During the past five years the manner and style of Kiwi school leadership has been summarised to provide us with clarity and focus as we consider how school leadership operates and evolves.

**Kiwi Leadership for Principals** and **Tū Rangatira** – **Maori Medium Educational Leadership** provide us with clear descriptions of the expectations regarding leadership of school personnel and communities. These in turn provide us with the shape of the dispositions adopted by our tumuaki.

e.g. [Kiwi Leadership for Principals](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Leadership-development/Other-professional-information/Kiwi-leadership-for-principals/Areas-of-practice) pp19-23 – as you read [Principal Leadership Activities](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Leadership-development/Other-professional-information/Kiwi-leadership-for-principals/Key-principal-leadership-activities) and [Areas of Practice](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Leadership-development/Other-professional-information/Kiwi-leadership-for-principals/Areas-of-practice) note all the references to leadership of staff. Then take each sub-heading, such as Pedagogy, and reflect upon the many pointers to effective leadership of staff.

e.g. [Tū Rangatira](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Leadership-development/Other-professional-information/Tu-rangatira-English) – pp 20-39 Read the Leadership Roles and Areas of Practice – read and note all the references to leading staff effectively and the focus areas they relate to such as Mana Tangata, Mana Wairua and Mana Ā-Kura.

[**School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why**](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/2515/60169/60170) **– Use pp182-199 to** appreciate the importance of Building Relational Trust and in carrying out Open to Learning Conversations when engaged in personnel interactions.

These three summaries provide the foundation for sound practice in leadership of school personnel and focus our attention on the continuous need to build and maintain high levels of relational trust.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

**Task – As a leader how well are you applying the Building Trust Between Principals and Teachers checklist provided by Brewster and Railback?**

[Building Trusting Relationships for School Improvement](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Culture/Leading-staff/Building-Trusting-Relationships-for-School-Improvement-Implications-for-Principals-and-Teachers) by Cori Brewster and Jennifer Railsback Brewster, C. & Railsback, J. (2003). *Building trusting relationships for school improvement: Implications for principals and teachers*. Oregon, USA: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

* Take the checklist they provide on p6 of the PDF (and p12 in the actual text) and next to each list examples of their applicability in your leadership context.
* Take each point on the checklist and on a 10 point scale rank how well you have worked to build trust in that aspect. Identify two items on the list you intend to watch closely – perhaps because you are conscious you need to think to apply them as they are not yet part of your sub-conscious actions.
* Choose two aspects from the checklist that help leaders who face many short and often emotionally loaded interactions with members of their teams. Why have you chosen them?
* Note the second checklist **Building Trust Among Teachers (**on pp 8-9 of the PDF and p15-17 of the actual text.) How could you use it in your school?
* Consider [In School Communication: Who with and why](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Managing-your-school/Guides-for-managing-your-school/Communications#eztoc34107_0_3). Use the suggestions to reflect upon your effectiveness in building trust through communication.